



## William Whalley of Gretton

William Whalley was born in Bolton abt. 1893. His father was James Whalley from Kirkham, his mother Margaret Whalley from Preston. James was a railway engine driver.

In 1901 James, Margaret and their children John, Richard, William and Frederick were living in Station Road, Kirkham, Bolton. John and Richard were born in Preston; William and Frederick were born in Bolton.

Currently William Whalley cannot be identified on the 1911 Census, although his father James Whalley (b. Kirkham) was living with a Susannah Hogg in Darwen, Lancashire. The census entry indicates that he was "separated".

On 6<sup>th</sup> May 1913 William Whalley married Ada Alice Goode of Gretton in Preston, Lancashire.

William and Ada had a son Thomas born on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1913 in Preston.

Ada Alice Goode was born in 1899 in Gretton.

In 1891 her father Thomas Goode and mother Jane Goode were living in Gretton with their children George Weston, Sarah, William, Nellie, Annie and Ada. Thomas was an ironstone labourer.

In 1901 Thomas Goode was a labourer on the railway. Only Jane and Ada were recorded on the census at the family home.

By 1911 Ada Goode was working as a cook for John and Ellen Royce in The Woodlands, Barley Thorpe, Oakham. John Royce was an auctioneer & valuer.

### Military History

William Whalley enlisted on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1913 in Preston. William was to serve as a Private (2346) in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. His civilian occupation was general labourer (one of his references was from a manager in a banana factory). William was living near Bolton.

From 24<sup>th</sup> November 1913 to his mobilisation for war service on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1914 he was in the Army Reserves. He was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.



William Whalley was in France from 19<sup>th</sup> September 1914. He was killed in action (presumed dead) on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1914 during the Battle of Gheluvelt.

Private William Whalley is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial and the Gretton War Memorial.

### The **Battle of Gheluvelt**, 29 - 31 October 1914

At the end of October large concentrations of German assault troops assembled for a further breakthrough attempt on Ypres, putting the most vulnerable point of the Allied line, the sector held by the British between Ploegsteert Wood and Gheluvelt, in grave peril. The morning of 29 October saw repeated mass German infantry attacks astride the Menin Road against the British 1st and 7th Divisions, forcing them back to Gheluvelt. A day of desperately vicious close-quarter fighting ended with British units regaining much lost ground. Intense German attacks towards Gheluvelt were renewed the following day, but made little progress in the face of disciplined British defence. By nightfall, though heavily dented, the British line had not broken.

Saturday 31 October witnessed the main German assault, with Gheluvelt central to momentous events. The first German attacks, falling on 3rd and 2nd Brigades at the eastern edge of the village, were repelled but following intense enemy shelling, a second German onslaught around 10am overwhelmed the defenders. By 11.30am German troops were in Gheluvelt and crucially the British defensive line had been pierced. The way to Ypres, only four miles distant, lay open.

Following a precarious reconnaissance of the situation around midday, Brigadier-General Charles FitzClarence, Commander of 1st (Guards) Brigade, secured permission to commit the last available reserves: 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment was instructed to recapture Gheluvelt and stabilise the line. In a most dramatic counter-attack this remnant force surprised German troops in the grounds of Gheluvelt Chateau and forced their retreat. Contact was established with British outposts to the north-east and the line restored. Again, though at immense human cost, German efforts at breakthrough to Ypres were frustrated.

*Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission*



## References

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

### ***Lest We Forget***

**William Whalley**  
of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment

d. 31<sup>st</sup> October 1914

After his death his widow Ada Alice Whalley returned to Gretton, presumably with her son Thomas. Ada was living in Nook End, Gretton in 1918.

In 1920 widow Ada Alice Whalley married William Spencer in Preston.

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